

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for wrapping a load with packaging material, comprising:  
holding a leading end of a film web extending from a dispenser;  
providing relative rotation between the load and the dispenser to wrap the film web around the load;  
securing a portion of the leading end of the film web to a fixed wrapping structure prior to releasing the leading end of the film;  
releasing the leading end of the film web; and  
securing the released leading end of the film web to the load.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein securing a portion of the leading end of film includes overwrapping a portion of the leading end with the film web to secure the portion of the leading end to the fixed wrapping structure.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein overwrapping the leading end of the film web includes overwrapping the fixed wrapping structure such that the fixed wrapping structure is positioned between the load and the overwrapped film web.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein releasing the leading end of the film web includes actuating a clamp.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein releasing the leading end of the film web includes releasing the leading end to lay on a substantially horizontal surface.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the released leading end of the film web includes sweeping up the released leading end off of a substantially horizontal surface.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein sweeping up the released leading end includes capturing the released leading end with the film web as it extends between the load and the dispenser.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein sweeping up the released leading end of the film web further includes overwrapping the fixed wrapping structure such that the fixed wrapping structure and the released leading end are positioned between the load and the overwrapped film.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein providing relative rotation includes rotating a turntable.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising vertically moving the dispenser on a mast.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein releasing the leading end of film occurs while the dispenser is at a position on the mast approximately level with a top of the load.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising removing the load from a load wrapping surface.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein removing the load includes lifting the load to release overwrapped film from the fixed wrapping structure.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein removing the load also includes sliding the overwrapped film on a film release bar.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein removing the load includes tilting the fixed wrapping structure.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the released leading end of film includes securing the released end of film between two layers of film.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein securing the released leading end of film includes capturing the released leading end with the film web as it extends between the load and the dispenser.

18. A method of securing an initial tail of packaging material to a load while wrapping the load with packaging material, comprising:

holding a leading end of packaging material;

wrapping the packaging material around a fixed wrapping structure, at least a portion of the leading end of the packaging material that is being held, and the load;

releasing the overwrapped leading end of packaging material; and

securing the released leading end of packaging material between two layers of packaging material.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein holding a leading end of the packaging material includes holding the leading end with a clamp.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein wrapping the packaging material includes providing relative rotation between a packaging material dispenser and the load.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein providing relative rotation includes rotating a turntable supporting the load and the fixed wrapping structure.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein securing the released leading end of packaging material includes capturing the released end with a web of the packaging material.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein securing the released leading end of packaging material further includes securing the released end to the fixed wrapping structure with the web of packaging material.

24. A method of securing a final tail of film to a load while wrapping the load with a film web, comprising:

positioning a load on a load support surface adjacent to a fixed wrapping structure;

dispensing a film web from a dispenser;

providing relative rotation between the load and the dispenser to wrap the film web around the load and the fixed wrapping structure;

distending a film path extending between a corner of the load and the dispenser with a portion of the fixed wrapping structure;

severing the film between a corner of the load and the dispenser; and

securing a severed end of film to the load.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein providing relative rotation between the load and the dispenser includes wrapping the film web over the fixed wrapping structure.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein securing the severed end of film to the load includes engaging the severed end of film with a protrusion of the fixed wrapping structure.

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27. The method of claim 24, wherein severing the film includes weakening the film between the fixed wrapping structure and the dispenser.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein severing the film further includes providing relative rotation between the dispenser and the load to tear the weakened film.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein securing the severed end of film includes engaging the severed end of film as it snaps toward the corner of the load after tearing.

30. The method of claim 24, further comprising, prior to providing relative rotation, holding a leading end of the film web extending from the dispenser.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising securing a portion of the leading end of the film web to the fixed wrapping structure prior to releasing the leading end of the film.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising releasing the leading end of the film web.

33. The method of claim 32, further comprising securing the released leading end of the film to the load.

34. The method of claim 24, further comprising:  
holding a leading end of the film web extending from the dispenser;  
releasing the leading end of the film web; and  
securing the released leading end of the film to the load.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein securing the released leading end of the film includes securing the released leading end between two layers of film.

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36. An apparatus for securing an initial tail of film to a load while wrapping the load with packaging material, comprising:

means for holding a leading end of packaging material;

means for providing relative rotation between the load and a dispenser to dispense packaging material;

means for securing a held leading end of packaging material; and

means for securing a released leading end of packaging material between two layers of packaging material.

37. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the means for providing relative rotation includes a turntable.

38. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the means for holding the leading end of packaging material includes a clamp.

39. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the means for securing the held leading end of packaging material includes a fixed wrapping structure.

40. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the fixed wrapping structure is positioned between the means for holding the leading end of packaging material and a load support surface.

41. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the means for securing the held leading end of packaging material further includes a layer of packaging material.

42. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the fixed wrapping structure includes a proximal end portion, a distal end portion, and a top surface extending between the proximal and distal end portions.

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43. The apparatus of claim 42, wherein the fixed wrapping structure is positioned to permit the held leading end to extend over the top surface of the fixed wrapping structure between the means for holding the leading end and a corner of the load.

44. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the means for securing the released end of packaging material includes a substantially horizontal surface.

45. The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the substantially horizontal surface is a plate.

46. The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the means for securing the released end of packaging material includes a web of film extending between the dispenser and a portion of the means for securing the held end of packaging material.

47. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the means for securing the held end of packaging material includes a fixed wrapping structure.

48. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the web of film extends between the dispenser and a distal end portion of the fixed wrapping structure.

49. An apparatus for securing an initial tail of film while wrapping a load with packaging material, comprising:

a film dispenser;

a load support surface;

a film clamp;

means for providing relative rotation between the load and the

dispenser to wrap film around the sides of the load;

a fixed wrapping structure positioned between the film clamp and the load support surface, the fixed wrapping structure having a proximal end portion, a distal end portion, and a top surface extending between the proximal and distal end portions, the proximal end of the wrapping structure being positioned such that a leading end of film held by the film clamp passes over the top of the fixed wrapping structure while film dispensed during relative rotation between the dispenser and the load engages the proximal end portion of the fixed wrapping structure.

50. An apparatus for securing a final tail of film to a load while wrapping the load with a film web, comprising:

a load support surface;

a film dispenser;

means for providing relative rotation between the load and the dispenser to wrap the film web around the load and a fixed wrapping structure;

means for distending a film path extending between a corner of the load and the dispenser;

means for severing the film along the film path; and

means for securing a severed end of film to the load.

51. The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the means for providing relative rotation is a turntable.

52. The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the means for distending the film path includes a portion of the fixed wrapping surface, wherein the fixed wrapping surface is positioned adjacent the load support surface.

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53. The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the means for distending the film path further includes a protrusion that extends from the fixed wrapping surface into the film path.

54. The apparatus of claim 52, further comprising means for holding a leading end of the film.

55. The apparatus of claim 54, wherein the fixed wrapping structure is positioned between the load support surface and the means for holding the leading end of the film.

56. The apparatus of claim 55, further comprising means for securing a released leading end of the film to the load.

57. An apparatus for securing an initial tail of film and a final tail of film to a load while wrapping the load with a film web, comprising:

means for holding a leading end of a film web;

means for providing relative rotation between the load and a dispenser to dispense the film web;

means for securing the held leading end of the film web;

means for securing a released leading end of the film web between two layers of film;

means for distending a film path extending between a corner of the load and the dispenser;

means for severing the film web along the film path; and

means for securing a severed end of film to the load.

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58. A method of securing an initial tail of film and a final tail of film to a load while wrapping the load with a film web, comprising:

positioning a load on a load support surface adjacent to a fixed wrapping structure;

holding a leading end of a film web extending from a dispenser;

providing relative rotation between the load and the dispenser to wrap the film web around the load and the fixed wrapping structure;

securing a portion of the leading end of the film web to the fixed wrapping structure prior to releasing the leading end of the film;

releasing the leading end of the film web;

securing the released leading end of the film web to the load;

distending a film path extending between a corner of the load and the dispenser with a portion of the fixed wrapping structure;

severing the film between the corner of the load and the dispenser;

and

securing a severed end of the film to the load.